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LETTER DATED 25 SEPTEMBER 1991 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I.
OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF ALBANIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Further to my letter dated 24 September 1991 to the President of the Security Council, I have the honour to communicate to you the following.

Owing to the decision taken by the States members of the Security Council, the delegation of the Republic of Albania did not have the possibility to take the floor at the meeting of the Security Council in the discussion of the agenda item entitled "The situation in Yugoslavia".

In these circumstances, I kindly request that the statement, annexed hereto, of the Chairman of the delegation of the Republic of Albania to the forty-sixth session of the General Assesmbly, H.E. Mr. Muhamet Kapllani, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, be circulated as a document of the Security Council, in connection with the situation in Yugoslavia.

(Signed) Genc MLLOJA
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Permanent Mission of the
Republic of Albania to the
United Nations

Annex

Statement of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania on the situation in Yugoslavia

The holding of the Security Council meeting indicates that the Yugoslav crisis is cause for concern not only for Europe, but for the entire international community as well. It is an expression of the responsibility of this community to solve through peaceful means and to avert through the commitment of the United Nations the crisis that threatens peace, security and the construction of a new world order. Experience has shown that lack of stability, even in a single region or country, can develop into a factor of general insecurity.

The Republic of Albania has hailed and supported all the initiatives for a peaceful solution of the Yugoslav crisis. It upholds the view that the use of force to solve the Yugoslav crisis is most dangerous to peace and security. The intervention of the international community to solve the Yugoslav crisis in a peaceful way is not only indispensable for mediation between the opposing parties, but also a right emanating from the Charter of the United Nations and the documents of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

To resolve the Yugoslav crisis the international community should take account of all the factors that are contributing to the crisis and of the interests of the peoples living in Yugoslavia. Respect for the will of these peoples must lie at the very foundation of its endeavours. Until this principle is recognized in a differentiated and selective manner, there will be no settlement of the Yugoslav crisis, or the solution to it will be short-lived and unstable. In that case it would have unpredictable consequences for our region and Europe.

As a neighbouring country of Yugoslavia, the Republic of Albania is justified in concerning itself with the extremely grave situation in Yugoslavia, all the more so when the question has to do with a direct military threat by Serbia to other parts in Yugoslavia and Kosova with which Albania has joint borders and where there is half the Albanian nation. Resort to force against the Albanians in Yugoslavia would lead to a Serbian-Albanian conflict resulting in a chain reaction and armed conflict fraught with very dangerous and unpredictable consequences to peace in the Balkans and in Europe.

The new realities in Yugoslavia, the inability of the federal structures to discharge their functions, the absence of the political will by the parties to the conflict to find a compromise solution and come to a peaceful dialogue are accompanied by the danger of flare-up of a general armed conflict of unforeseeable consequences. The proclamation of independence by Slovenia and Croatia and the declaration of sovereignty by Kosova, Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina show that the structures created during the totalitarian communist rule failed to represent the will of the peoples of Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia is

the only country in Europe that has failed to hold free elections at a federal level. After the free elections at the republican level, the ideological conflict was also added to the conflicts that have always been present in Yugoslavia, owing to the violent and artificial unification of peoples with different cultures, history, languages and religions. While the Bolshevik system was overthrown in some republics, in other republics, such as in Serbia, not only did it win in the elections, but grew even more aggressive. Failure to reach a compromise between the national-communist regime on the one hand and the democratic regime on the other impelled such republics as Slovenia and Croatia to seek a break-away from the unitarist State which Serbia sought to create. That is why the European Communities, with their commitment to the defence of peace and democracy in Yugoslavia, continue to be a great hope for putting an end to the conflict in that country. But if it fails, the international community through the United Nations should also take up for discussion the likelihood of using other means and options, which have proved to be effective in other cases when international peace and security have been in serious jeopardy. If the view of the unity of Yugoslavia is insisted upon, then the centrist and unitarist forces, as well as the Army which the Serbs dominate, will be encouraged to step up the use of force and violence to preserve Yugoslavia against the will of its peoples.

What has touched off the reaction of the democratic forces within and without Yugoslavia is the fact that the constitutional order has long been violated. The invasion of Kosova and the efforts to occupy Croatia and Slovenia, the fact that the Army has got out of constitutional control, as well as other facts, are evidence of this violation.

The Republic of Albania holds that the solution of the Yugoslav crisis must have at its own foundation the principle of self-determination of the peoples, achieved only in a peaceful way and through democratic means, in compliance with the United Nations Charter and the Helsinki documents. No act, whatsoever, that tramples upon this principle can be lawful. As developments have shown, such a solution cannot be stable either. In this context, we hold that the implementation of this principle should not exclude any people, who has the right to express itself and decide upon its future in a peaceful and democratic way. The borders established on the basis of the realities and the frame of mind that existed at the beginning of this century can in no way be recipes today for the attainment of the aspirations of any people and nation to live free or united, to set up and live in whatever system of government it wishes.

Availing myself of this opportunity, I would like to draw your attention to the tragic situation of the Albanian people in Yugoslavia. The Albanians in Yugoslavia are the most suppressed and persecuted people in Europe since the Second World War. They are a victim of a policy of genocide at the hands of Serbia, which, by perpetrating violent acts in Kosova, has abused and betrayed the conscience of mankind.

The question of the Albanians is not unknown, for it has been and still is a subject that has been taken up and examined by various European human

rights forums, organizations and bodies, as well as by parliamentarians and Governments of Europe and the United States of America. It has been dwelt upon by the most important institutions, such as the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, and so on.

In Kosova, the Serbian regime, obsessed with the idea of Greater Serbia, is opposed to any democratic process. For 10 years now, the Albanians in Yugoslavia have been facing the most savage brutality against and suppression of any individual and collective freedom and right. As of July 1990, Serbia's policy of occupation was "complemented" with new means of violence and terror. After the Parliament of Kosova legally announced the proclamation of the Republic, independent of Serbia, the latter dissolved that Parliament and the Government, closed down the Albanian radio-television station and banned the newspapers that appeared in the Albanian language. Besides, Albanian workers were sacked by the thousands, and a campaign of Stalinist-type purges against Albanian specialists started in public health, education, etc. This is how violence, unprecedented in the modern history of the States of Europe, is being resorted to in the cultural, political, economic and social fields. This is a policy that combines brutality with Serbian anti-Albanian chauvinism, turning Kosova in the midst of Europe into a collective prison of the Albanian people in Yugoslavia, separating it by a new type of Berlin Wall from half of the Albanian nation that lives in the Republic of Albania. This is a policy that has inflicted serious physical and spiritual wounds on the Albanian people, denying them the right to material progress and cultural and spiritual development, the right to self-government and information in the mother tongue, to medical care and education, depriving the Albanian people of political and civil rights that have been enshrined not only in the international documents to which Yugoslavia is a party, but also in the Yugoslav Constitution still in force. This policy of genocide that jeopardizes the very existence of the Albanian people and threatens the other peoples of Yugoslavia has led to civil war and to the present Yugoslav crisis.

Albania upholds the view that freedom is a birthright of any people. Therefore, this is also a right for the Albanians in Yugoslavia, who are entitled to enjoy the freedom they are demanding. The violence and terror they have been experiencing ever since before the Second World War, the organized terror since 1981 makes the enjoyment of this birthright a must for their historical existence. In view of this tragic experience, on 22 September 1991 the legal representatives of the Albanian people endorsed the resolution on the Republic of Kosova as an independent and sovereign state, with a right to constituent participation in the league of sovereign states or republics in Yugoslavia. This decision of the Parliament of Kosova is fully legitimate for, in the first place, it is based on the free expression of the political will of the citizens and is a great achievement in the further promotion of the democratic processes in the Republic of Kosova.

The Albanians in Yugoslavia have never been, nor are they a minority because they are the third biggest population in Yugoslavia after the Serbs and the Croats. They make up half the Albanian nation. In neither direction can they be considered a minority. The Albanian people wish to enjoy only

what belongs to them, according to the principles of democracy and the conscience of humankind, to enjoy full rights and shoulder the highest responsibility in the community of nations.

The Europe of the great powers that drew up the political map of Europe at the beginning of this century, turning the Albanian question into a tragic question in the Balkans, is obliged historically and morally, especially today when it is on the way to a new democratic Europe, to render its own contribution to a correct solution of this issue; and not only Europe, but also the United States of America, which has become today the symbol of democracy.

The exemption of the Albanians from the talks on the future of the peoples who comprise Yugoslavia is not only an injustice but also a serious stumbling-block to the resolution of the Yugoslav crisis. If initially they were exempted from the federation, now they should not be allowed to be excluded from Europe, too, when it is common knowledge that the Albanians are the third biggest people of Yugoslavia, numbering more than 3 million.

At this lofty forum of the United Nations, where decisions of vital importance have been adopted as to such events, we would like to draw attention to the danger posed by tolerance towards the use of force which is intended to suppress and deny the legitimate will of the peoples.